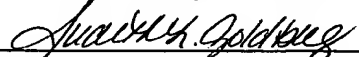


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COOKING DEVICE

CROSS-REFERENCE TO RELATED APPLICATIONS

Not Applicable.

FEDERALLY SPONSORED RESEARCH OR DEVELOPMENT

Not Applicable.

TECHNICAL FIELD

The present invention relates to a cooking device for use with a barbecue grill. More specifically, the present invention relates to a cooking device with a curvilinear configuration for use with a cooking chamber of a barbecue grill.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

As the popularity of barbecue grills has increased, manufacturers have introduced a multitude of specialized accessories for use in connection with the grills. These accessories include cooking devices with a surface adapted to receive food. Cooking devices generally increase the number and types of foods that can be cooked on the barbecue grills, thereby increasing the utility of the grills. In addition, the cooking device can provide a different technique or method to cook the food. For example, the cooking device can have a generally flat surface such that the device can be used as a skillet, or the cooking device can have a curved surface such that the device can be used as a wok.

Typically, the cooking device is fabricated from metal and is placed on the

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cooking chamber of the barbecue grill assembly. Specifically, the cooking device is positioned on a rim or outer edge of the cooking chamber. The cooking device is supported in this position by structure which generally extends from the device beyond the rim of the cooking chamber. In addition, the structure extends above the rim of the cooking chamber. This extending structure precludes a lid or cover of the barbecue assembly from engaging the cooking chamber. As a result, the cooking chamber cannot be sealed, thereby compromising the operation and performance of the barbecue grill.

An example of a cooking device susceptible to the problem identified above is U.S. Patent No. 4,495,861 to Jacks et al. As shown in FIGS. 1-5 therein, the circular cooking device has a generally flat surface, divider flanges, and a plurality of handles extending from an outer edge of the cooking device. The handles support the cooking device over the cooking chamber by engaging a portion of the rim of the cooking chamber. To engage the rim of the cooking chamber, each handle extends beyond the rim. Consequently, the handles prevent the lid of the grill assembly from engaging and sealing the cooking chamber. In addition, since the diameter of the cooking device is less than the diameter of the lower portion, there is an annular void or gap between the cooking device and the rim of the cooking chamber.

Another example of a cooking device with the concerns identified above is a "wok"-style cooking device previously marketed by the Assignee of the present invention. The wok cooking device has a generally annular rim with a recessed portion depending therefrom. The device is positioned on the rim of the cooking chamber wherein a substantial portion of the device extends above the rim. A plurality of braces extends from an exterior surface of the recessed portion and supports the cooking device on the rim. A pair of opposed handles extend beyond the rim of the cooking chamber. Because a substantial portion of the wok cooking device extends above the rim and the handles extend beyond the rim, the lid of the grill assembly cannot engage and seal the lower portion. Like the cooking device of the '861 patent, there is an annular void or gap between the present cooking device and the rim of the cooking chamber.

Therefore, there is a definite need for a cooking device for use in a cooking chamber of a barbecue grill assembly that does not preclude the upper portion from engaging and generally sealing the cooking chamber. In addition, there is a need for a cooking device that does not negatively affect the performance and operation of the barbecue grill assembly.

The present invention is provided to solve these and other problems.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

The present invention relates to a cooking device or pan for use with a barbecue grill. The cooking device is adapted to be positioned generally within a cooking chamber or firebox of the barbecue grill. A lid or cover mates with the cooking chamber to form a barbecue grill assembly. The cooking device has a generally annular top wall with inner and outer peripheral edges. A generally annular flange depends from the top wall at the outer peripheral edge. The flange has an engaging surface adapted to engage a portion of the inner surface of the cooking chamber. At least one aperture is preferably located in a portion of the flange. Alternatively, the aperture is located in a portion of the top wall. The aperture is adapted to permit a user to grasp the cooking device. The aperture is further adapted to permit the passage of a quantity of heat generated by a heat source in a lower portion of the cooking chamber.

The cooking device has a center portion that is positioned radially inward from the top wall. Preferably, the center portion is recessed from the inner peripheral edge of the top wall such that the cooking device has a generally conical or hemispherical shape. The center portion has a bottom wall that is adapted to prevent unwanted movement of the cooking device when it is placed on a generally planar surface. Such planar surface could include a table or auxiliary cooking burner. The center portion and the bottom wall are adapted to receive a quantity of food to be cooked while the cooking device is positioned within the cooking chamber. Accordingly, the center portion and the bottom wall each have a configuration and dimensions sufficient to receive a measurable quantity of food. The food can then be distributed or spread on the center portion and/or the bottom wall for cooking in a manner similar to "wok" style cooking.

In accord with the invention, the cooking device is positioned within the cooking chamber and above the heat source to define a use position. The cooking device is supported in the use position by frictional engagement between of a portion of the flange engaging surface and a portion of the inner surface of the cooking chamber. Alternatively, the cooking device is supported in the use position by at least one support member extending radially inward from the inner surface. In general terms, the support member is adapted to engage a portion of the flange engaging surface to support the cooking device in the use position.

In the use position, the top wall is in planar alignment with the rim of the cooking chamber and the flange is positioned generally below the rim. When the lid is positioned on the cooking chamber, the rim of the lid engages the rim of the cooking chamber to generally seal the cooking chamber. Thus, the cooking device is entirely within the cooking chamber and, in contrast to conventional cooking accessories, the cooking device does not obstruct or hinder the lid from engaging the cooking chamber. As a result, the performance and operation of the barbecue grill is not compromised or affected.

In the use position, the cooking device is spaced a distance above the heat source, which is generally located in a lower portion of the cooking chamber. Furthermore, in the use position, the cooking device and the cooking chamber define a cavity. The cavity represents a volume within the cooking chamber, which can be increased by increasing the distance between the cooking device and the heat source, or decreased by decreasing the distance between the cooking device and the heat source. As the heat source burns, heat Q is generated and rises through the cavity. A quantity of the heat Q is transferred to the cooking device through the lower surface of the cooking device. The remaining quantity of heat Q is vented or dissipated through the aperture. Accordingly, the aperture is adapted to vent a portion of the heat Q from the cavity and the cooking chamber while food is being cooked on the cooking device.

The dimensions of the cooking device can vary greatly with the dimensions of the grill. Preferably, the dimensions of the cooking device correspond to the internal dimensions of the cooking chamber. In this manner, and in contrast to conventional cooking accessories, the cooking device does not obstruct or hinder the rim of the lid from engaging the rim of the cooking chamber. This provides an important benefit, primarily that the cooking device fits entirely within the cooking chamber such that the cover engages and seals the cooking chamber.

In another preferred embodiment, the cooking device has a flange formed from a plurality of distinct flange segments. As a result, the flange has a discontinuous configuration with a plurality of open areas. The segments generally depend from the outer peripheral edge of the top wall.

In another preferred embodiment, the cooking device has at least one handle. The handle is adapted to enable a user to more easily grasp the cooking device. The handle can be positioned in a number of locations, including the top wall, the flange, or the central portion. The handle is configured such that it does not interfere with the

positioning of the cooking device in the cooking chamber. In addition, the handle is adapted not to interfere with the placement of the lid on the cooking chamber.

In yet another preferred embodiment, the cooking device is positioned within an interface plate. The interface plate has a generally rectangular configuration with an aperture that is adapted to receive the cooking device. The interface plate can be used in conjunction with a gas barbecue grill having a generally rectangular cooking chamber. When the cooking device is positioned within the aperture, an annular side wall of the interface plate engages a portion of the exterior surface of the center portion to support the cooking device. Because the cooking device is received by the interface plate and both are positioned within the cooking chamber, the rim of the lid can engage the rim of the cooking chamber to seal the cooking chamber.

Other features and advantages of the invention will be apparent from the following specification taken in conjunction with the following drawings.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS:

FIG. 1 is a perspective view of a cooking device of the invention showing the cooking device with a barbecue grill assembly;

FIG. 2 is a perspective view of the cooking device of FIG. 1;

FIG. 3 is a side view of the cooking device of FIG. 1;

FIG. 4 is a top view of the cooking device of FIG. 1;

FIG. 5 is a bottom view of the cooking device of FIG. 1;

FIG. 6 is a partial cross-section view of the cooking device of FIG. 1, showing a lid of the grill assembly positioned above a cooking chamber of the grill assembly;

FIG. 7 is a partial cross-section view of the cooking device of FIG. 1, showing the lid of the grill assembly positioned on the cooking chamber of the grill assembly;

FIG. 8 is a partial detail view of the cooking device of FIG. 1, showing an engaging surface of the device engaging a support member according to FIG. 6;

FIG. 9 is a perspective view of an interface plate for use with the cooking device of FIG. 1;

FIG. 10 is a perspective view of a second cooking device of the invention;

FIG. 11 is a top view of the cooking device of FIG. 9;

FIG. 12 is a perspective view of a third cooking device of the invention, the cooking device having a pair of handles; and,

FIG. 13 is a perspective view of the cooking device of FIG. 12.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE INVENTION:

While this invention is susceptible of embodiment in many different forms, there is shown in the drawings and will herein be described in detail preferred embodiments of the invention with the understanding that the present disclosure is to be considered as an exemplification of the principles of the invention and is not intended to limit the broad aspect of the invention to the embodiments illustrated.

A cooking device or pan **10** for use with a barbecue grill assembly **12** is illustrated in FIG. 1. The grill assembly **12** has a cooking chamber or a lower bowl **14** and a lid **16** adapted to mate with and cover the cooking chamber **14**. The cooking device **10** is adapted to be positioned generally within the cooking chamber **14**. A handle **17** is attached to the lid **16**.

A heat source **18**, for example, briquets, is supported by a grate **20** in a lower portion **19** of the cooking chamber **14**. The grill **12** includes a pair of handles **22** attached to an outer surface of the cooking chamber **14**. A plurality of legs **24** depend from the cooking chamber **14**. A plurality of wheels **26** are attached to the grill **12**. The cooking chamber **14** has an outer rim **28**. An outer rim **30** of the lid **16** is adapted to engage and mate with the rim **28** of the cooking chamber **14** to seal the cooking chamber **14**. A movable vent **31** in the lid **16** is adapted to vent the grill assembly **12**.

Referring to FIGS. 2-5, the cooking device **10** has a generally annular top wall **32** with a top wall surface **32a**. Although the top wall **32** is shown as having a curved surface **32a**, the surface **32a** can be generally flat or angled. Means for engaging **36** depends from an outer peripheral edge **34** of the top wall **32**. The engaging means **36** can be a generally annular flange **36** that is continuous or formed from discontinuous segments. The flange **36** has an engaging surface **38**, which as explained below, is adapted to engage or mate with a portion of the interior surface of the cooking chamber **14**. In one example of a preferred embodiment, the flange **36** is integral with the top wall **32**. The flange **36** has a flange surface **36a**, which can be curved or generally flat. Preferably, the engaging surface **38** terminates with a rolled edge or lip **39** (see FIG. 8).

At least one aperture **40** is located in a portion of the flange **36**. Alternatively, the aperture **40** is located in a portion of the top wall **32**. The aperture **40** is adapted to

permit a user to grasp the cooking device **10**. The aperture **40** is further adapted to permit the passage of a quantity of heat generated by the heat source **18** when the cooking device **10** is positioned within the cooking chamber **14**. In this manner, the aperture **40** vents the heat generated by the heat source **18**. The aperture **40** has an edge **42** that defines the shape of the aperture **40**. Although shown in FIG. 2 as having an oval or obround shape, the aperture **40** can have a variety of shapes, including but not limited to circular, square, or rectangular. The quantity and configuration of apertures **40** can vary with the numerous design parameters of the cooking device **10**.

As shown in FIGS. 2-5, the cooking device **10** has a central portion **44** that is positioned radially inward from an inner peripheral edge **46** of the top wall **32**. Described in a different manner, the flange **36** extends radially outward relative to the central portion **44**. The central portion **44** has a generally smooth cooking surface **44a** and an exterior surface **44b**. Preferably, the central portion **44** is recessed such that the cooking device **10** has a generally conical or hemispherical shape. Described in a different manner, the cooking device **10** has a curvilinear configuration when viewed in cross-section. The degree of recess or curvature of the central portion **44** can vary with the design parameters of the cooking device **10**. In alternate configuration, the top wall **32** is omitted from the cooking device **10**. In this configuration, the flange **36** extends radially outward from the peripheral edge **46**.

The central portion **44** has a bottom wall **48** that is adapted to prevent unwanted movement of the cooking device **10** when it is placed on a generally planar surface. Such planar surface could include a table or auxiliary cooking burner. Accordingly, the bottom wall **48** has a generally flat or linear configuration. Alternatively, the bottom wall **48** has a curvilinear configuration. The central portion **44** and the bottom wall **48** are adapted to receive a quantity of food to be cooked while the cooking device **10** is positioned within the cooking chamber **14**. Accordingly, the central portion **44** and the bottom wall **48** each have a configuration and dimensions sufficient to receive a measurable quantity of food. In addition, the surface **44a** is adapted to facilitate the cooking of food placed on the central portion **44**. The food can then be distributed or spread on the central portion **44** and/or the bottom wall **48** for cooking in a manner similar to "wok" style cooking.

Referring to FIG. 3, the top wall **32** defines an uppermost surface **49** of the

cooking device **10**. The uppermost surface **49** can be generally flat or rounded. The uppermost surface **49** is positioned at a height **H1** above the engaging surface **38** of the flange **36**. As shown in FIG. 3, the height **H1** is the distance between the engaging surface **38** and the uppermost surface **49**. The height **H1** can vary with the design parameters of the cooking device **10**, including but not limited to the top wall **32**, the flange **36**, and the central portion **44**. However, the height **H1** is adapted to permit the cooking chamber **14** to be covered by the lid **16** without any interference from the cooking device **10**. Described in a different manner, the height **H1** should not be so great as to prevent the lid **16** from engaging and mating with the cooking chamber **14** when the cooking device **10** is positioned within the cooking chamber **14**.

As shown in FIGS. 1, 6 and 7, the cooking device **10** is removably positioned within the cooking chamber **14** and above the heat source **18** to define a use position. The cooking device **10** is supported in the use position by at least one support member or tab **50**. Due to the recessed nature of the central portion **44**, a substantial portion of the device **10** depends into the cooking chamber **14**. Referring to FIG. 8, the support member **50** is affixed to an inner surface **52** of the cooking chamber **14** and extends radially inward therefrom. The support member **50** is adapted to engage and support a portion of the flange **36** and/or engaging surface **38**. Although shown in FIG. 8 as having a generally "L-shaped" configuration with a vertical segment **54** and a horizontal segment **56**, the support member **50** can have various configurations depending on the design parameters of the flange **36** and the rim **38**. In the event that the support member **50** lacks the vertical segment **54**, a portion of the flange **36** engages a portion of the horizontal segment **56** and/or the inner surface **52** of the cooking chamber **14**. In addition to being adapted to engage and support the cooking device **10**, the support member **50** is adapted to engage and support a cooking grate (not shown) that is removed from the cooking chamber **14** before the cooking device **10** is inserted therein.

Alternatively, the cooking device **10** is supported in the use position by the engagement of a portion of the engaging surface **38** with a portion of an inner surface **52** of the cooking chamber **14**. Accordingly, the dimensions and configuration of the cooking device **10** and the flange **36** closely correspond to the interior dimensions of the cooking chamber **14**.

In one example of a preferred embodiment, the cooking device **10** is entirely

within the grill **12** and in contrast to conventional cooking accessories, the cooking device **10** does not obstruct or hinder the lid **16** from engaging and mating with the rim **28** of the cooking chamber **14**.

As shown in FIG. 7, an interference region **60** is found within a cavity **62** of the lid **16**. The interference region **60** has a generally annular configuration which generally corresponds to the annular configuration of the top wall **32**. The interference region **60** is spaced a vertical distance **H2** above the uppermost surface **49** of the top wall **32**. The size, configuration, and vertical position of the interference region **60** will vary with the configuration of the lid **16**, the top wall **32**, and the uppermost surface **49**. When the cooking device **10** is in the use position, the uppermost surface **49** is below the interference region **60** and the lid **16** can engage and mate with the cooking chamber **14**. In the event that a portion of the uppermost surface **49** engages a portion of the interference region **60**, the lid **16** cannot engage and mate with the cooking chamber **14**. As a result, the cooking chamber **14** is not sealed and the cooking performance of the grill assembly **10** is compromised.

Although the uppermost surface **49** is shown in FIG. 7 as being in planar alignment with the rim **28** of the cooking chamber **14**, the cooking device **10** can be positioned a distance below the rim **28**. In addition, the cooking device **10** can be positioned above the rim **28**; however, to prevent the uppermost surface **49** from obstructing the engagement of the lid **16** and the cooking chamber **14**, the uppermost surface **49** should be positioned below the interference region **60**. Accordingly, the interference region **60** represents a boundary region for the uppermost surface **49**, above which the lid **16** cannot engage and seal the cooking chamber **14**.

Referring to FIGS. 6 and 7, in the use position, a trough **64** is formed between the flange **36** and the inner surface **52** of the cooking chamber **14** near the rim **28**. Although shown as being generally annular, the configuration of the trough **64** varies with the design parameters of the device **10** and the positioning of the cooking device **10** within the cooking chamber **14**. The configuration of the trough **64** is increased when the cooking device **10** is positioned further below the rim **28** of the cooking chamber **14**. Conversely, the configuration of the trough **64** is decreased when the cooking device **10** is positioned closer to the rim **28**.

In the use position, the cooking device **10** is spaced a distance above the heat

source **18**. More specifically, the central portion **44**, the flange **36**, and the bottom wall **48** are spaced a distance from the heat source **18** to define a cavity **66**. The cavity **66** represents a volume within the cooking chamber **14**, and is defined or bounded by the heat source **18**, the inner surface **52** of the cooking chamber **14**, and a lower surface **54** of the cooking device **10**. The volume of the cavity **66** can be increased by increasing the distance between the cooking device **10** and the heat source **18**, or decreased by decreasing the distance between the device **10** and the heat source **18**.

As the heat source **18** burns, heat **Q** is generated and rises through the cavity **60**. A quantity of the heat **Q** is transferred to the cooking device **10** through the lower surface **54**. The remaining quantity of heat **Q** is vented or dissipated through the aperture **40**. Accordingly, the aperture **40** is adapted to vent a portion of the heat **Q** from the cavity **60** while food is being cooked on the cooking device **10**. The quantity of heat vented by the aperture **40** varies with the design parameters of the device, including the number of apertures **40** in the cooking device **10** and the size or configuration of the aperture **40**. Accordingly, a greater amount of heat is vented when the number of apertures **40** is increased and/or the configuration of the apertures **40** is increased.

The rim **28** of the cooking chamber **14** defines a first perimeter **P1** and the engaging surface **38** of the flange **36** defines a second perimeter **P1**. Unlike conventional devices, the cooking device **10** is adapted to be positioned entirely within the first perimeter **P1**. As a result, no part of the cooking pan **10** extends beyond or exceeds the perimeter of the perimeter defined by the rim **28**. Consequently, the diameter of the cooking device **10** generally corresponds to the diameter of the cooking chamber **14** and/or cooking chamber **14**. The remaining dimensions, for example the flange **36** height and the depth of the central portion **44**, can vary greatly with the dimensions of the grill **12**. The cooking device **10** has a generally hemispherical configuration when the cooking chamber **14** has a round configuration. Similarly, the cooking device **10** has a generally rectangular configuration when the cooking chamber **14** has a rectangular configuration. In this manner and in contrast to conventional cooking accessories, the cooking device **10** does not obstruct or hinder the rim **30** of the lid **16** from engaging the rim **28** of the cooking chamber **14**. This provides an important benefit, primarily that the cooking device **10** fits entirely within the cooking chamber **14** such that the cover **16** engages the cooking chamber **14** to seal the cooking chamber **14**.

The cooking device **10** can be manufactured from steel, aluminum, or other metals, including metal alloys. The cooking device **10** can be formed in a number of ways, including cast or stamped processes. The material used to fabricate the cooking device **10** should permit heat transfer from the heat source **18** to the food cooked on the cooking device **10**.

The cooking device **10** is adapted for use with an outdoor cooking assembly (not shown) having an auxiliary burner. The burner is connected to either a mobile cart or a portion of a barbecue grill assembly. In the former, the burner is supported on a mobile cart formed from a plurality of frame members. In the latter, the burner is supported by a plurality of frame members in a position external to the cooking chamber. In either situation, the burner has a support grate or ring adapted to support a cooking pot or pan. The cooking device **10** of the present invention can be used in conjunction with the burner by positioning the device **10** on the support ring. Specifically, the generally flat bottom wall **48** of the central portion **44** engages the support ring and provides stability to the cooking device **10** while food is cooked in the device **10**. Because the cooking device **10** can be positioned in the cooking chamber **14**, on a cart-mounted burner, or on externally-mounted burner, the versatility of the cooking device **10** is significantly increased. Accordingly, the value of the cooking device **10** to a user is similarly increased.

In another preferred embodiment, the L-shaped support member **50** is omitted from the cooking chamber **14** and the inner surface **52** has means for supporting the cooking device **10** in the use position. The supporting means can be an annular or discontinuous ledge integrated with the inner surface **52**. The ledge can engage a portion of the flange **36** or a portion of the exterior surface **44b** of the central portion **44**. Alternatively, the supporting means is a groove or a channel formed in the inner surface **52** that receives a portion of the flange **36**. In yet another alternative, the supporting means is a brace or plurality of braces extending radially inward from the inner surface **52** with a depending segment that engages a portion of the exterior surface **44b** of the central portion **44**.

Referring to FIG. 9, the cooking device **10** can be positioned within an interface plate **80** which is adapted for use within conventional generally-rectangular gas barbecue grill. The interface plate **80** has a generally rectangular configuration with an aperture

82 that is adapted to receive the cooking device 10. When the cooking device 10 is positioned within the aperture 82, an annular side wall 84 engages a portion of the exterior surface 44b of the central portion 44 and/or the flange 36 to support the cooking device 10. Alternatively, a portion of the flange 36 engages an upper surface 80a of the interface plate 80. The aperture 82 can be positioned in a central portion of the interface plate 80, or in a peripheral peripheral portion (as shown).

The interface plate 80 can be used in conjunction with a gas barbecue grill (not shown) having a generally rectangular cooking chamber defined by a cover and a firebox. A heat source is located in a lower portion of the firebox. The conventional metal grate(s) is removed from the cooking chamber and the interface plate 80 is positioned therein. The cooking device 10 is then placed in the aperture 82 and supported above the heat source. Because the cooking device 10 is received by the interface plate 80 and both are positioned within the firebox, the cover can engage the firebox to seal the cooking chamber.

In another preferred embodiment shown in FIGS. 10 and 11, the cooking device 110 has a flange 136 formed from a plurality of distinct segments 137. In comparison to the flange 36 shown in FIGS. 2-5, the flange 136 has a discontinuous configuration with open areas 140. The segment 137 depends from the peripheral edge 34 of the top wall 32. The segment 137 has an engaging surface 138. The segment 137 is adapted to permit a user to grasp the cooking device 110. The number of segments 137 and the configuration of such varies with the design parameters of the cooking device 110 and the cooking chamber 14.

As discussed above, the cooking device 110 is positionable within the grill 12 and above the heat source 18 to define a use position. The cooking device 110 is supported in the use position by the engagement between the engaging surface 138 and at least one support member 50. Alternatively, the cooking device 110 is supported in the use position by the frictional engagement of the engaging surface 138 with a portion of the inner surface 52 of the cooking chamber 14. The open area 140 is adapted to permit the passage of a quantity of heat Q generated by the heat source 18 when the cooking device 110 is in the use position.

In another preferred embodiment in FIGS. 12 and 13, the cooking device 210 includes at least one handle 270. The handle 270 is adapted to enable a user to more

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easily grasp the cooking device **210** such that it can be placed in or removed from the cooking chamber **14**. The handle **270** can be positioned in a number of locations, including the top wall **32**, the flange **36**, or the central portion **44**. As shown in FIG. 11, the handle **270** has a generally horizontal first segment **270a** between two generally horizontal second segments **270b**. A generally vertical third segment **270c** extends through and past an aperture **272** in the top wall **32**. A generally horizontal fourth segment **270d** prevents disengagement of the handle **270** when the user engages and extends the handle **270**. The handle **270** is extendable a distance in a generally vertical direction when a user engages the first segment **270a** and/or the second segments **270b**. When the user disengages the segments **270a**, **270b**, the handle **270** retracts the distance such that the handle **270** is positioned adjacent an upper surface (not shown) of the top wall **32**. Described in different terms, when disengaged by the user, the handle **270** is generally flush with the top wall **32**.

The handle **270** is adapted not to interfere with the positioning of the cooking device **210** in the cooking chamber **14**. In addition, the handle **270** is adapted not to interfere with the placement of the lid **16** on the cooking chamber **14** when the cooking device **210** is positioned within the cooking chamber **14**. As disclosed above, the top wall **32** defines a first uppermost surface **49**, which is below the interference region **60** thereby permitting the cooking chamber **14** to receive the cover **16**. The handle **270** defines a second uppermost surface **274** which, like the first uppermost surface **49**, is positioned at a height above the flange **36**. The position of the second uppermost surface **274** depends upon the position of the handle **270**. When the handle **270** is disengaged and the device **210** is in the use position, the second uppermost surface **274** is positioned below the interference region **60** thereby permitting the cooking chamber **14** to receive the cover **16**.

Preferably, when the device **210** is in the use position, no portion of a disengaged handle **270** makes contact with the rim **28** or extends past a perimeter (not shown) of the cooking chamber **14** defined by the rim **28**. Once engaged and extended by the user, a portion of the handle **270** may extend a distance above a generally horizontal plane defined by the rim **28** of the cooking chamber **14**.

While the specific embodiments have been illustrated and described, numerous modifications come to mind without significantly departing from the spirit of the

invention and the scope of protection is only limited by the scope of the accompanying Claims.

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